

RESULTS SUMMARY

Update: More sustainable shelter policy in Cox's Bazar refugee camps

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PROJECT	<i>Title:</i>	Improving Living Condition of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs) and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar District of Bangladesh
	<i>Partner:</i>	Caritas Bangladesh
	<i>Country:</i>	Bangladesh
	<i>Period:</i>	2022-2026

CHANGE	In cooperation with Caritas Denmark (CDK), Caritas Bangladesh (CB) influenced a Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) policy change, so that a “cradle-to-grave” perspective on construction and demolition waste management is incorporated into the sector policy for shelter design and construction in Cox Bazar. Through innovation, and coordination in sector cluster and working groups, CB has put sustainable construction and demolition waste management on the agenda in the local shelter sector in the Rohingya refugee camps.
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CONTEXT	Waste, including construction waste, related to the almost 1,2 M Rohingya refugees residing in Cox's Bazar camps is a huge challenge. Bound by Govt. policy, sustainable shelter designs have not been allowed, prompting a unsustainable reconstruction and demolition cycle, producing organic, plastic and metal waste resulting in a hazardous waste build-up in the camp environment. With the official approval of CBs Waste Revive Resilient Shelter (WRRS) model, policies have new stipulations regarding how to minimize waste from shelters.
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CONTRIBUTION	CB emerged as a prominent member of the Shelter & CCCM committee, where CDK's flexible and long-term funding has been critical in CBs ability to influence. By identifying waste produced by the shelter sector as a key area of concern, an iterative process of developing, testing and documenting ways of re-using and recycling shelter construction/demolition waste was initiated. CB developed pilots, adapted demos in line with standards, raised awareness and committee interest, which was approved by an extensive technical review at sector level.
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IMAGES	 WRRS design blueprint, Photo: CB  Multi-stakeholder technical screening, testing and review of WRRS, Photo: CB
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[See next page for more details](#) →

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

Findings from a scoping survey regarding waste and in-camp plastic recycling opportunities guided CDK and CB to narrow in on the waste generated by the shelter sector itself. A demo pilot project was developed, based on consultations with field staff and the Rohingya community. Re- and up-cycled materials (bamboo and plastic) were used to test and document the viability of a more circular shelter design, based on waste tarpaulins, improved methods for slope and retention wall protection, testing a mobile non-flammable wall for the kitchen areas, and alternative composite re-cycled materials for the lower sections of shelter walls. A demo shelter was used to keep duty bearers and sector stakeholders informed and to demonstrate opportunities. CB continuously developed and re-designed the circular model based on changing RRRC standards, culminating in the WRRS design. Sector working and coordination spaces was strategically used to influence standards and share innovations, which proved critical for scaling and inspiring the actors across the wider shelter sector.

LESSONS

The WRRS model approval signifies a first-step shift in governments past non-negotiable standpoint regarding Rohingya shelter standards, and a change in shelter sector policy regarding use of construction and demolition waste which will reduce the huge amount of waste in the camps. It also provides an opportunity for the Rohingya community to have a much needed income through cash-for-work shelter re-cycling activities, as their opportunities for economic activities are very restricted. CDK learnt, based on evaluation evidence, that its flexible and long-term support, technical input and support in documentation helped elevate CB's visibility in the Shelter Cluster and related technical working groups. Innovations such as WRRS were shared early with sector peers, allowing replication and generating recognition for CB as a leader in environmentally responsible shelter solutions. Evaluation evidence show a great deal of interest in adoption by other actors present in the camps.

EVIDENCE

The result is documented in minutes from meetings with the community where previous practices on management of construction waste and new ideas were discussed. Also, bi-annual and annual reporting, meeting minutes with field staff on past practice and innovative ideas were shared with extensive photo documentation and a video on the background of the pilot project and the initiatives taken by CB. The official approval of the WRRS by RRRC signifies the ultimate evidence of policy and practice result. Physical evidence is the demo shelter, and the planned construction of WRRS shelters starting in 2026. The minutes of the shelter sector meetings, as well as End of Programme Evaluation of CDK and CB partnership programme, have evidence of presentation of the concept, and cluster members' interest and constructive engagement in discussing and adopting the model. This positions the WRRS well for continued scaling and spread.

DOMAINS

Development strategy priorities:

Insert strategy priority

Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability

X

Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights

X

Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights

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Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights

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Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability

X

Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work

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